

434 AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS

434.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes situations involving aircraft accidents, the responsibilities of personnel, making proper notifications and documentation.

434.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Aircraft accident - An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight and all such persons have disembarked, and in which any person suffers death or serious injury, or in which the aircraft receives substantial damage (49 CFR § 830.2).

434.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

In the event of an aircraft accident, the employee responsibilities are as follows.

434.2.1 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Officers should treat an aircraft accident site as a crime scene until it is determined that such is not the case. If a military aircraft is involved, additional dangers, such as live ordnance or hazardous materials, may be present. The scene may require additional security due to the potential presence of confidential equipment or information.

The duties of the field officer at the scene of an aircraft accident include the following:

1. Determine the extent of the accident.
2. Request additional personnel and other resources to respond as needed.
3. Provide assistance for the injured parties until the arrival of fire department personnel and/or other emergency personnel.
4. Cordon off and contain the area to exclude unauthorized individuals as soon as practicable.
5. Provide traffic and crowd control and other assistance until directed otherwise by a supervisor.
6. Ensure the appropriate Medical Examiner's Office is notified if a death occurs.

Entering an aircraft or tampering with parts or debris is only permissible for the purpose of removing injured or trapped occupants, protecting the wreckage from further damage or protecting the public from danger. If reasonably possible, the investigating authority should first be consulted before entering or moving any aircraft or any accident debris. Photographs or sketches of the original positions should be made whenever practicable.

The fire department is responsible for control of the accident scene until the injured parties are cared for and the accident scene has been rendered safe for containment. Thereafter, police personnel will be responsible for preserving the scene until relieved by the investigating authority.

Once the scene is relinquished to the investigating authority, personnel from this agency may assist in containment of the scene until the investigation is completed or assistance is no longer needed.

An airport service worker or the airport manager may respond to the scene to assist the on-scene commander with technical expertise, should it be needed during the operation.

434.2.2 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has the primary responsibility for investigating accidents involving civil aircraft. In the case of a military aircraft accident, the appropriate branch of the military will be involved in the investigation. The NTSB is concerned with several aspects of an accident as described in this section.

Every effort should be made to preserve the scene to the extent reasonably possible in the condition in which it was found until such time as the NTSB or other authorized personnel arrive to take charge of the scene.

Military personnel will respond to take charge of any military aircraft involved, regardless of any injury or death.

If the accident did not result in a death or injury and the NTSB elects not to respond, the pilot or owner may assume control of the aircraft.

Removal of the wreckage shall be done under the guidance of the NTSB or military authorities. If the NTSB is not responding for an on-site investigation, it will be removed at the discretion of the pilot or the owner.

434.2.4 RECORDS SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Records Supervisor's responsibilities include:

1. Forwarding and maintaining an approved copy of the report to the Missouri Department of Transportation, Aviation Section.
2. Forwarding a copy of the report to the Patrol Bureau Commander and the manager of the affected airport.

434.2.5 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Police Department Public Information Officer's responsibilities include:

1. Obtaining information for a press release from the on-scene commander or the authorized designee.
2. When practicable, coordinating with the FAA Press Information Officer on preparing a press release and distributing it to the media.

COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy Manual

Information released to the press regarding any aircraft accident should be handled by the Department Public Information Officer or in accordance with existing policy.

434.3 DOCUMENTATION

Any aircraft accident within the City, regardless of whether injuries or deaths occur, shall be documented.